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The Arizona BEEHIVE

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I CAN SEE THE TEMPLE!

Mesa Arizona Temple's RENOVATION NEARS COMPLETION

A spectacular sunrise spotlighting the Mesa Arizona Temple seems to carry a message of hope and the promise of a new day as the temple's two-year renovation project nears completion.

Photo by Hank Eyring

By Cecily Markland Condie

In an official statement, the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announced in August 2017 that the historic Mesa Arizona Temple would be closed beginning May 2018 for "needed repairs and upgrades."

Renovation of the 75,000-square-foot

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Mesa Temple Renovation
Continued from pg. 1

temple was to include upgrades to its heating, air conditioning, plumbing and electrical systems as well as aesthetic and functional renewal of the interior. The 20-acre site would also undergo massive reworking, including removal and replacement of the reflection ponds on the north and west sides of the temple, razing the Visitors' Center to open the view from Main Street, and the construction of a more permanent stage for the Easter Pageant on the east side of the site. A concurrent project would complete a complex with apartments and shopping as well as a new Family Discovery Center across the street west of the temple site.

Now, with miles of sod laid, flowers planted and extensive landscaping beginning to flourish and with the outside lighting once again breaking through the darkness, neighbors and passersby recognize that the two-year renovation of Mesa's "oasis in the desert" is nearing completion.

Yet, as with other temple construction and renovation projects, the Church's website states, "Given the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic, no open house and dedication dates have been announced for any temple, including Mesa."

Actually, the timing—and even the setbacks—seem significant. A temple in Arizona had been discussed as early as 1908, but World War I put those plans on hold. Ultimately, the site was dedicated 100 years ago, in November 1921. Heber J. Grant conducted the groundbreaking April 15, 1922, and five and a half years later, dedicated the completed temple on October 23, 1927. That afternoon, the temple was in operation.

Then known as the Arizona Temple, it was the first outside of Utah in the continental United States and is still recognized as one of the largest the

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Photo by Hank Eyring

To make room for the new and improved additions and changes, the renovation and renewal of the Mesa Arizona Temple and its grounds began with the razing of the 58-year-old Visitor's Center and removal of the reflection ponds and much of the landscaping.

Courtesy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

President Heber J Grant and fellow Latter-day Saints following the dedication of the Arizona Temple on October 23, 1927.

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What's The Buzz?

As the present now
Will later be past,
The order is rapidly fadin'...
And the first one now
Will later be last,
For the times they are a-changin'!

The times are indeed a-changin'. Just ask those effected by the pandemic. You may have noticed that some of the hardest hit are businesses that rely on advertising dollars to fund their operations. The Arizona Beehive Magazine has been severely affected by this phenomenon.

We have always been dedicated to telling stories about our local Latter-day Saint community. Hard copy has traditionally delivered our content. Recently we have moved into the digital world by offering the magazine on the ISSUU app, and by increasing our social media presence.

But recent times have destroyed the marketing budgets of many of the businesses, events, and community service organizations that advertise. Additionally, many locations that distribute the magazine are no longer open, or are not willing to offer any printed material during Covid.

From your feedback, I know that you eagerly read and enjoy the stories and pictures we publish six times a year. Funding the vehicle we use to deliver them to you is the issue. Advertising has traditionally 100% paid for our operation. With the current mass reduction of advertising in the marketing environment, **it's time to create new ways to fund production of the magazine! That's where Patreon.com comes in.**

"Patrons" are people who support creators so they can focus on their creative works. Michelangelo, Da Vinci, and many modern artists we appreciate today had patrons. The Patreon.com website provides a safe and popular platform for many generous people to offer support to modern creators they like. Through a donation that may seem small to you, in aggregate for the creator, becomes a patronage that directly enables them to continue to produce and increase the quality of their work. We aim to continue to create, produce, and improve The Arizona Beehive Magazine with the support of our advertisers AND our patrons!

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Thank you for supporting The Arizona Beehive Magazine!

Michael O'Brien, Publisher

The Arizona Beehive

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Photo by Hank Eyring

With the sod laid, trees and flowers planted and, especially, with the sign completed over the door—"Holiness to the Lord, The House of the Lord"—many are eager to have the opportunity to tour the temple prior to its dedication and after, to participate in the work there.

Church has constructed. It is also historically significant as it served the entire southwestern United States, Mexico, and Central and South America for many years, and with ordinances offered in Spanish in 1945, it was the first temple to offer a language other than English.

The recent closure represents the temple's second major renovation. The first, a 14-month closure beginning in 1974, expanded the dressing rooms, increased the number of sealing rooms and equipped the temple for film presentation of the endowment sessions. The temple was rededicated April 16, 1975, by Spencer W. Kimball.

Gary Porter, principal owner of Porter Brothers Construction, general contractors for the current Mesa Temple project, says, "It is not a 'restoration' to how it was in 1927. Instead, it's a 'renovation,'" meaning that while some of the original features have been restored to as near original as possible, many of the systems and elements have been updated to modernize them and make them more efficient.

Of the project, Porter says, "It's been amazing. It's been quite a journey."

One of the many "ups" of that journey, he says, was "when the structural engineers did an assessment, they found the concrete was not cracked or damaged; it was extremely well-built and very structurally sound."

It isn't any wonder, as, according to the book, The Ninth Temple: A Light In the Desert, it originally took 13 months to build the concrete foundation, pillars and roof. When they were finished, a report stated they were "the most carefully measured, scientifically constructed, perfectly organized masses of concrete and steel every constructed into a building."

The current renovation has taken this same attention to detail and concern for the best outcome possible. Overseen by the Porter Brothers' project managers, father and son team Dawson and Spencer Stewart, the renovation has included replacing windows and doors and reworking the foyer, "so there is more of a buffer from the fierce afternoon sun and so the non-patron waiting room could be expanded," Porter says.

A number of artisans added their talents and expertise, from plaster restoration, millwork, gold leafing and more. For example, while as many murals as possible were saved and cleaned, "sometimes we could save only one wall or portion of a

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Artist rendering of the Mesa temple grounds showing the Pageant Stage situated on the north lawn (left side of image).

Courtesy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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5 $25 FOR Frugal Fun!

Check out these five great family activities for under $25 per person – AND they're close to home!

By Emily Jex Boyle

This time of year is one of the reasons we love living in Arizona. Wherever you live in this beautiful state, this season offers beautiful opportunities across the board. From Pinetop to Parker, from Safford to Seligman, early spring is a great time to be out and about. Here are some inexpensive options to enjoy together this year.

Sloan Park

Photo by stadiumjourney.com

#1 Spring Training Games

Tickets are on sale for Cactus League baseball games through March 30 across the Valley with games beginning mid-February. Take your picnic blanket to one of the baseball facilities to catch a game on the grass. Purchase a ticket for a game between the 2020 World Series Champions, the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Chicago Cubs, or watch the Texas Rangers play the Kansas City Royals. Admission prices for some games are under $25 per person. Purchase tickets soon. Most if not all teams will be severely limiting the number fans allowed inside stadiums due to the pandemic. For details, visit:

CactusLeague.com

Photo by arizonafineartexpo.com

#2 Arizona Fine Art Expo

Known as the best place to buy art, the annual Arizona Fine Art Expo is housed in the heart of the Sonoran Desert under a 44,000 square foot tent with 124 art studios inside. The expo runs each year from January 15 through March 28, open 10 – 6pm daily. Cost: $8-10 per person. For more information, visit:

ArizonaFineArtExpo.com

Photo by Susanna Boyle

Recognized as Best Museum by the *Phoenix New Times* in 2019 and 2020, the Contemporary Arts Museum at the Mesa Arts Center is open again with five remarkable galleries.

#3 Mesa Arts Center Contemporary Arts Museum

Recognized as Best Museum by the *Phoenix New Times* in 2019 and 2020, this local site is open again and worth a visit. With five remarkable galleries, the MCA Museum displays juried and curated exhibitions of contemporary art by internationally recognized artists as well as emerging ones. MCA Museum is open Tuesday – Saturday 10am – 5pm. Cost: free. To reserve your time, visit:

MesaArtsCenter.com/index.php/museum/visit

Photo by Emily Boyle

The Route 66 Fun Run embodies everything beloved about the Route 66: family, cars, community and Americana.

#4 33rd Annual Route 66 Fun Run

Each year, the town of Seligman welcomes visitors from around the world. Travel back in time on America's "Mother Road" during the traditional weekend of April 30 – May 2, 2021. Over 800 vehicles and their occupants join the Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona for this special weekend. Fun Run participants travel 140 miles from Seligman to Topock/Golden Shores. For its organizers, the Fun Run embodies everything beloved about Route 66: family, cars, community and Americana. You don't have to be a participant with a fancy old car to enjoy the run. Experience a free classic car parade, music, good food and more. For more information about events and costs visit:

GoKingman.com/event-66FunRun

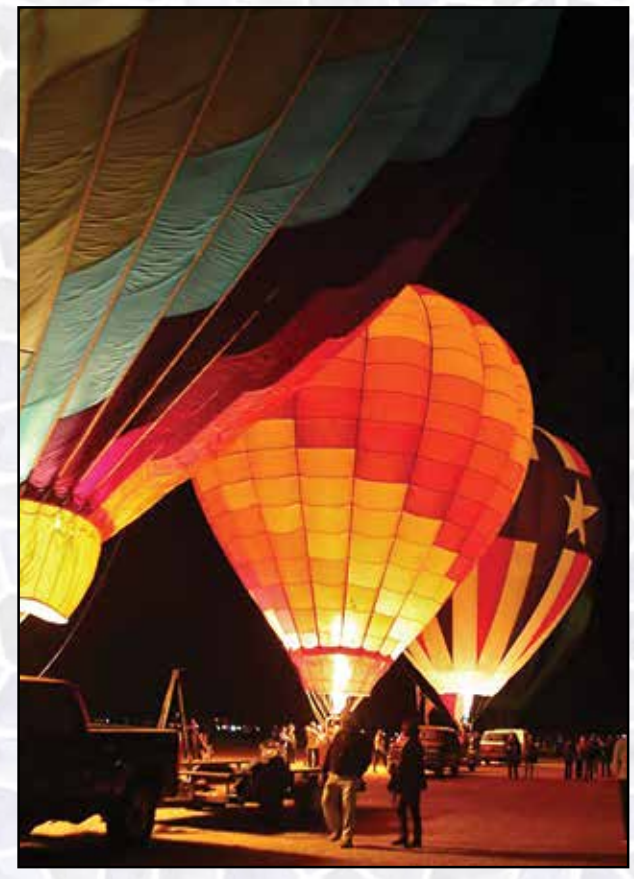

Photo by abcfest.com/gallery

#5 Hot Air Balloon Festival

On the same weekend, consider visiting Goodyear Ballpark for a beautiful sight of hot air balloons. Spectators may walk on the field and witness balloons inflate and take flight. This weekend also includes hot air balloon rides, tether rides, a food fest, live entertainment, stunt bike shows, an inaugural "Desert Winds Kite Festival," fireworks (Saturday) and more. General admission is $20. Free for children 12 & under, veterans and active duty military and spouses. For more information, visit:

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Go On, Take a Hike!

3 Great Hikes for Spring Fun & Fitness

Usery Mountain Park in the East Valley.

Photo by Z Glyph, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Looking for some outdoor fun this spring?
Try these three Arizona trails for some beautiful views!

By Merry Gordon

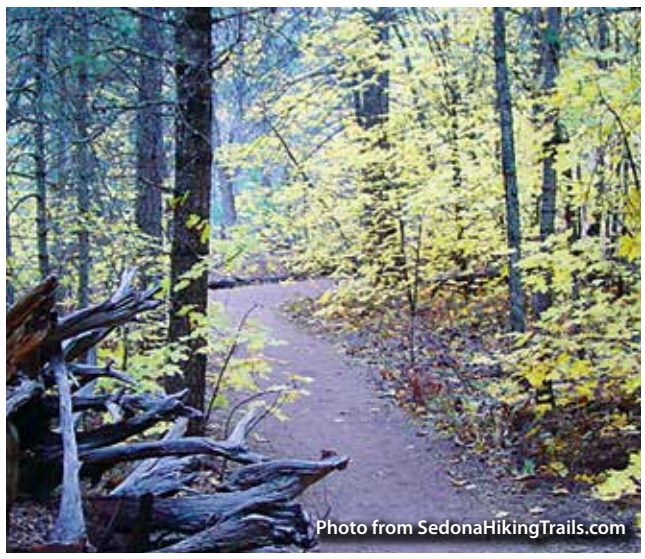

Photo from SedonaHikingTrails.com

West Fork Trail

SEDONA

Moderately Challenging

There's a reason Sedona's West Fork Trail is one of the most traversed in the state: simply put, it's gorgeous. If you're looking for seclusion, this heavily-trafficked trail probably won't provide it, but what it lacks in solitude it makes up for in beauty. The 7.5-mile out and back path is nestled in the red rocks and follows the lazy curves of Oak Creek. In summer, the canyon is partially shaded by soaring rock walls and thick foliage. When temperatures dip in winter, you can expect to see a dusting of snow. But the hike is at its most temperate and scenic in fall, as the leaves explode into color, and in the spring, when the wildflowers bloom and the songbirds nest. This trail features water crossings and you might expect to wade a little; it also offers ample opportunities for wildlife viewing and wandering around the historic cabins of Mayhew Lodge, now fallen into a picturesque ruin on the creekside. Go early to miss the crowds and secure parking in the $11 day-use lot, or park on the side of the road and walk in for $2 per person. Dogs are welcome, but must be kept on leash.

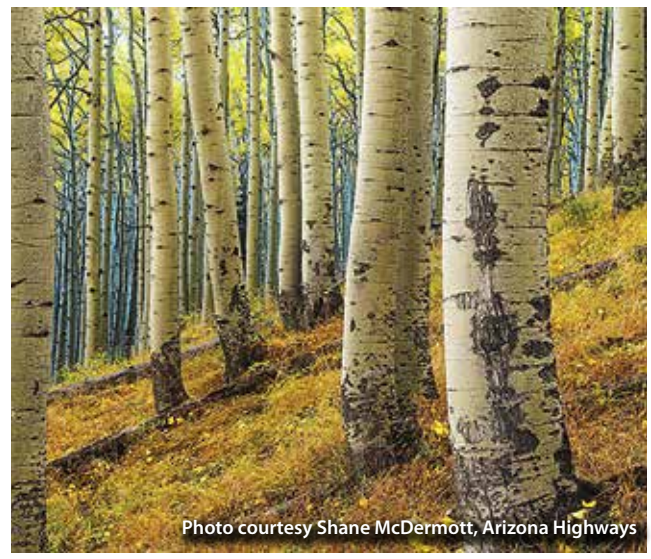

Photo courtesy Shane McDermott, Arizona Highways

Inner Basin Trail

FLAGSTAFF

Moderately Challenging

While most people associate Flagstaff with cool pines, the Inner Basin gives stunning views of its aspen groves to visitors willing to brave the narrow, rocky road up the San Francisco Peaks. An off-road vehicle may be best for the road up the mountain, especially in inclement weather. At an elevation exceeding 8,000 feet, expect that what should be a relatively easy hike can feel moderate, especially as you are switch backing through the trees in the extinct caldera. In fall, the golden aspens can seem otherworldly, and the meadow is a popular place for photographers. Traffic takes a toll on the primitive road; prepare for the road to be closed early when the lot is at capacity during peak season. Snow will impede a winter visit; it's best to come in the late spring or summer, when the greenery and moss-covered rocks seemingly transport you to another state (many say the trail feels like the Rockies).

Photo from AllTrails.com

Blevins Trail

MESA

Easy

Any Valley resident knows that the desert comes alive in spring. Usery Mountain Regional Park is glorious between about late February through April, with its profusion of wildflowers, and Blevins Trail is a great way for the family to see it in all its colorful glory. At just over three miles on even terrain with little elevation gain, this hike is one that nearly anyone can do. Dogs are welcome on leashes, and the well-traveled path is definitely kid-friendly. The loop trail takes a leisurely stroll around the desert with the mountains as a backdrop. While trails are open year-round, the summer heat makes them best visited from about late October through May, when the mercury rises. Vehicle entry for Usery Mountain Regional Park is $7 at the park.

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Songs Of Praise

Progress on the World's New Songbooks

By Allison Beckert

In 2018, the Church announced the production of a new, global hymnbook and children's songbook. A 2018 *Church News* bulletin reported that "members of the Church, no matter where they live in the world, will have the same hymns and the same songs and the same hymn numbers," said Elder Erich W. Kopischke, a General Authority Seventy and an adviser to the revision project. "We will literally be singing from the same page in every language," he said. The Church put a call out to members from all over the world to submit songs for these collections. This project is part of a long tradition of music in worship, as well as an early tenet of the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The books are far from completion. As of this past November, reports indicate, "While progress has been made on the revision process, the new music collections are still several years away from being released." However, the time needed for such an expensive project reflects the members' thoughtful contributions, the committees' thorough review process, and the exacting and doctrine-based goals at the heart of the project.

After the announcement, "members of the Church from 66 countries shared nearly 50,000 suggestions and more than 16,000 original hymns, songs and texts." These pieces were then reviewed with the main directives of the project in mind.

"Sacred music of the Church should:

- Increase faith in and worship of our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Teach the core doctrine of the gospel with power and clarity.
- Invite joyful singing at home and at church.
- Comfort the weary and inspire members to endure in faith.
- Unify members throughout the Church."

While the early reviews of the submissions are done by several rounds of talented musicians and text reviewers weekly, the top contributions are sent to the committees in charge of further review. According to the release by official sources, the final decision on the collections must be approved by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. This project is truly for the benefit of all members across the world, and all those who come to learn about the restored gospel.

Photo by Church Media Library

Congregations may have new songs to sing in the coming years as a global hymnbook and children's songbook is released.

The goals of this project are lofty. A global church will have a worldwide collection of unifying songs of worship. The Lord Himself assigned Emma Smith to create the first unified hymn collection for the use of members of the church in Doctrine and Covenants 25:11-12. As membership expanded to other parts of the world, hymns from that and subsequent versions were then translated to other languages and shared with other songs of worship. As *Church News* writers Valerie Johnson and Marianne Holeman Prescott said in their piece on the history of Latter-day Saint Hymnbooks, "Although changes will occur, the purpose of the hymnal will continue to fulfill its purpose—the same directive Emma Smith received from the Lord when she first compiled a hymnbook. That purpose is to comfort, strengthen and inspire Church members around the globe."

Mesa Temple Renovation
Continued from pg. 6

mural," Porter says.

In her studio in Utah, Linda Curley Christensen painted new mural sections on canvas, which were then shipped to Mesa to be affixed to the walls. "She would match all the colors and lines and continue the motif of the original mural around the room," Porter says. "They are beautiful. It's a miracle that someone could produce work like that and make it look like one artist did it."

The landscaping, too, was meticulously considered and extraordinary efforts were made to incorporate old features with the new—even though this meant taking measures such as moving and keeping 140 trees in a nursery for replanting.

Through it all, Porter says he has been "amazed at the magnitude of the involvement and attention from the Church."

"The attention to detail that is put into every little thing is phenomenal," says Hank Eyring, an aerial photographer and member of the Gilbert 18th Ward, who has chronicled every step of the project from initial demolition to current completion efforts.

The owner of a drone business that does aerial photography for real estate and construction projects, Eyring felt he could provide a service.

"In the early stages, I knew it would be hard for people to see it stripped bare and ugly, but I had seen the concept drawings and the artist renditions and was familiar enough with construction that I could see the vision," Eyring says. "I could see what was coming and I wanted do something so others could see the change and progression."

Courtesy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Artist rendering of the Family Discovery Center being constructed across the street.

Eyring's photos and monthly videos can be viewed on the Mesa Temple Construction Facebook page and details, updates and photographs are also available at https://churchofjesuschristtemples.org/mesa-arizona-temple/news/

Eyring, the many artisans and craftsmen, the landscapers and many who have watched with joy as the temple renovation draws to completion—all can echo Gary Porter's sentiment when he says, "It has been a blessing. I really feel blessed."

TRUE LOVE

What Is It, Really?

By Heather Sandstrom

It's spring, and love is in the air! What is love? Many people think love is just physical attraction and they casually talk about "falling in love" or "love at first sight". True love is a lot deeper than that. You can become attracted to another individual, but love is far more than just physical attraction. It is deep and inclusive. Physical attraction is important, but there must be faith, confidence, understanding and a partnership. There must be common ideals and stand ards. There must be total devotion and companionship.

President Boyd K. Packer said, "Ideally, mating begins with romance. Though customs may vary, it flourishes with all the storybook feelings of excitement and anticipation, even sometimes rejection. There are moonlight and roses, love letters, love songs, poetry, the holding of hands, and other expressions of affection between a young man and a young woman. The world disappears around the couple, and they experience feeling of joy. And if you suppose that the full-blown rapture of young romantic love is the sum total of the possibilities which spring from the fountains of life, you have not yet lived to see the comfort of long-time married love. Married couples are tried by temptation, misunderstandings, financial problems, family crises, and illness, and all the while love grows stronger. Mature love has a bliss not even imagined by newlyweds."

True love is a process. It requires personal action. Love must be continuing to be real. Love takes time, patience and respect for one another, the kind of respect that regards one's spouse as the most important friend on the earth and not as a possession. Too often infatuation or lust are mistaken for love.

It's important to first express our love often and reassure our spouse of our faithfulness to them by our actions. Also, we need to be quick to say, "I'm sorry." As hard as it may be to say it, it's important to apologize and ask for forgiveness if you've offended each other. True love develops when we are willing to readily admit personal offenses or mistakes. Communicate, and let your spouse know how you're feeling and let them do the same. Let each other know where you are at all times with a quick call or text. Then, pray together every morning and night. It helps heal any hurt feelings.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton said, "Love of God takes time. Love of family takes time. Love of country takes time. Love of neighbor takes time. Love of companion takes time. Love in courtship takes time. Love of self takes time."

Elder Neal A Maxwell said, "Perfect love is perfectly patient."

President Ezra Taft Benson said, "The secret to a happy marriage is to serve God and each other." He also said, "The key to a fruitful marriage is fidelity in all aspects of our relationships. Faithfulness, loyalty, patience, commitment and love are the keys to a happy life. Couples must learn to bridle their tongues as well as their passions."

Showing real love helps build friendships and strengthens commitment in relationships.

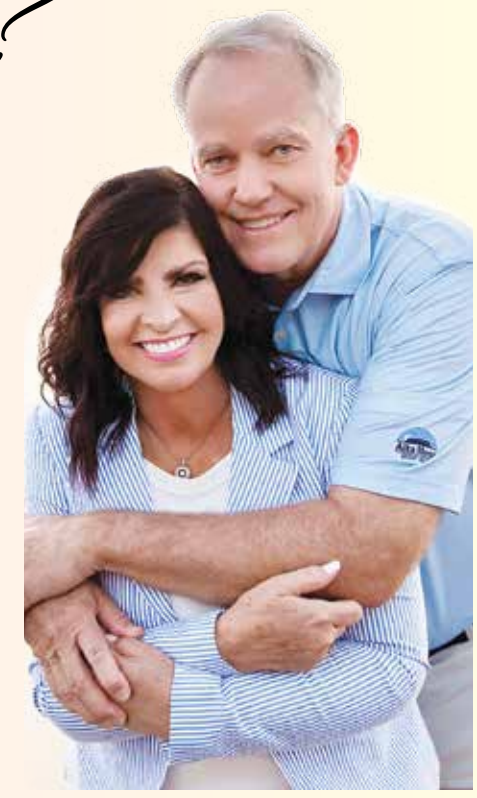

Photo by Marianne Overton Photography

Heather & Dr. Paul Sandstrom, celebrating 40 years of marriage in 2020.

Photo by Massey Photo Studio

Paul & Heather Sandstrom and her grandparents, President Ezra Taft & Flora Benson, at the Salt Lake City Utah Temple in 1980.

Dr. Paul R. Sandstrom

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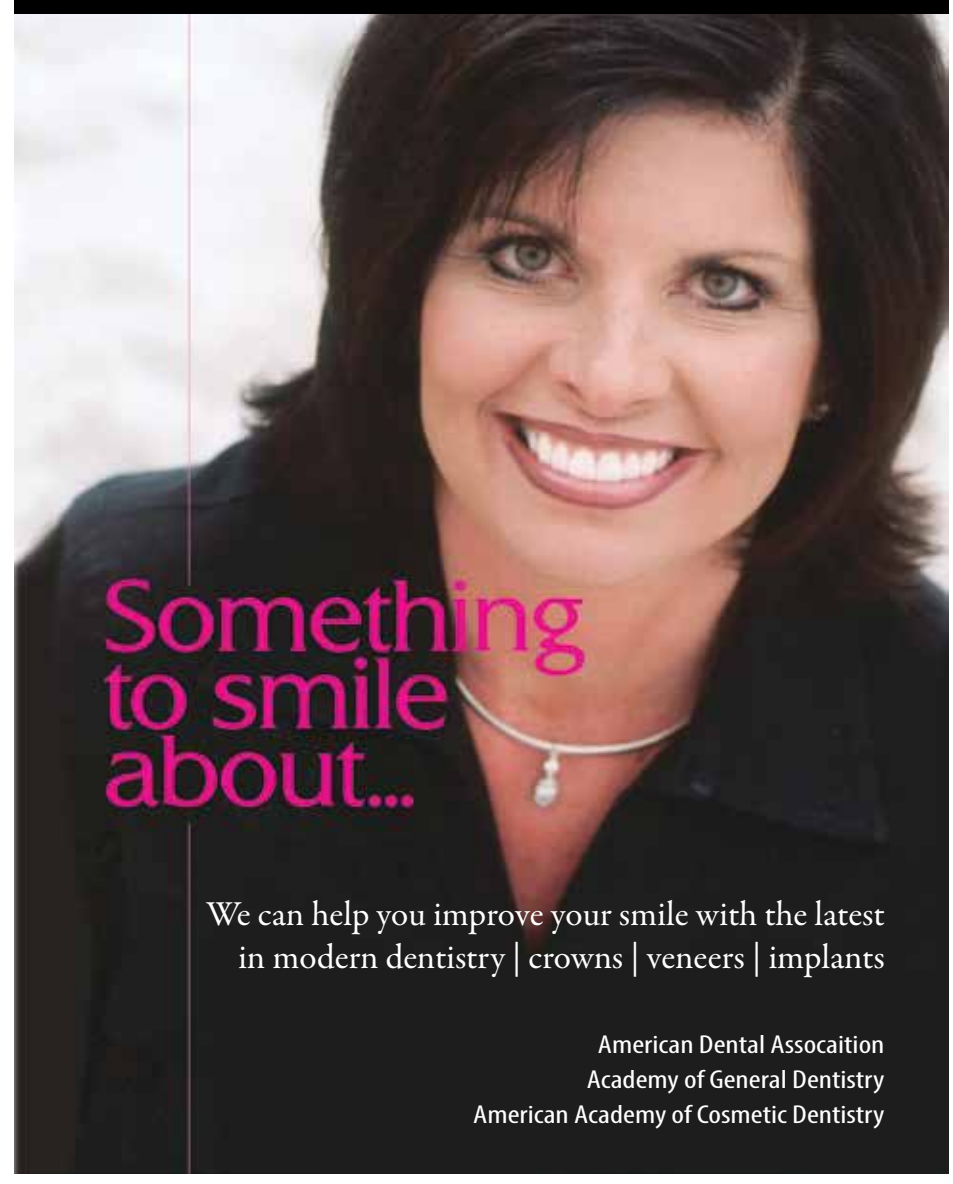
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PREP YOUR MISSIONARY

Remembering Your Service

By Allison Beckert

A full-time mission when you are young is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and it is unique to you. Commemorating your mission—whatever type you serve—is both an exciting idea and a daunting one, but with a little thought and effort, you and your family can work together to ensure you keep your mission memories for a lifetime.

Some of the more traditional methods include journaling, taking photos or collecting things from your local area to keep as mementos. Journaling is still highly recommended, both as a stress-relieving activity and a way to maintain your mental health on the mission. This does not have to be a many-pages-a-day effort, but making any effort will yield benefits. Writing your journal digitally, or keeping your photos online, can save a lot of space. However, if you do want your memories in a physical format, try to do this bit by bit rather than all at once at the end of your mission. This can save work later and prevent lost or corrupted files.

While your mission is about service to others, how you commemorate it should reflect you and your talents. Visual or artistic talents are a more common and accessible example in simple sketch journaling, expressive photography, or another travel-friendly art. Some missionaries have written or performed music, sharing their testimonies through musical talents and the recordings are part of their saved memories. Work within mission rules and Church guidelines. Look for ways to use your talents to remember your efforts in the field.

Sister missionary companionship. Photo by Church Media Library

Whatever your method, organization is key. A full-time mission is naturally organized by transfers, companionships and areas in which you serve. Service missions can still be parsed out by weeks or months, and these natural milestones can help you organize your mission memories. Deciding what you would like to do early on, and what you would like to do at these milestones, can help keep you on top of your mission progress, though there is nothing at all wrong with losing yourself in the work and changing your plans for something new.

Finally, welcome help. If you are serving away from home, send home any accumulated memories or belongings during the mission to save space and effort when transfers come up. Family and friends may have some great ideas! Ask around, though remember that you choose what to do. This is your experience to remember, your service to make the most of.

You mission is unique not just to you, but also to the time in which you serve, so record keeping is priceless not just to you, but potentially also to the history of the Church. Let this be an encouragement, and a pleasure.

Called to Serve

Elder Natsuki Saballos, Jr.
Alameda Ward, Tempe Stake

Albuquerque, New Mexico Mission

(Spanish Speaking Mission)

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Come Follow Me

This article supports the readings assigned in the manual titled *"Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families"* for January – April, 2021, comprising Doctrine and Covenants chapters 1 – 44 and Joseph Smith History.

The Lord's Super Heroes

By Robin Finlinson

In all the standard works of scripture, the Lord Jesus Christ uses a highly complementary name for the superheroes that join His work of saving humankind: "Saints." Thanks to Christ's infinite Atonement, if we continue on His covenant path, turning to Him daily through sincere repentance, we'll inevitably become 100% sanctified and qualified for exaltation. His grace will fill the deficit we'll surely have when called home and judged.

What do Saints do?

It's essentially the same for all, whether we're leading the youth of a neighborhood or the entire Church:

- Humble ourselves
- Knock (pray for guidance/personal revelation)
- Tune in to the voice of Christ (which, frankly, sounds like gibberish or folly if we're not humble)
- Have faith and hope in Christ
- Repent
- Keep commandments
- Have charity (pure love of Christ)
- Share substance with those in need
- Gather Israel (invite others to come unto Christ)
- Confidently declare truth, such as that through Christ, forgiveness of sin is possible
- Witness of Christ and The Book of Mormon
- Establish Zion (a righteous people ready to receive the risen Savior on earth)
- Endure anything brought upon us
- Exhibit virtues including soberness (level-headedness, wisdom, self-control); steadfastness (dependability, perseverance, courage); preparedness; kindness; and gratitude
- Align our desires with Christ's
- Do good things of our own choice with inspiration from Heaven, but without being commanded

Superhuman capability is clearly required!

What are Saints given for assistance?

- Ordinances: baptism for remission of sins; receiving (in abundance) the gift of the Holy Ghost; temple endowments
- The opportunity to renew covenants made with God each week by partaking of the bread that represents the body of Christ and the water that represents His purifying blood
- Holy scriptures
- The full armor of God, including the shield of increasingly strong faith
- Priesthood (authority to act in God's name)
- Individual spiritual gifts for our unique situations
- Peace of mind

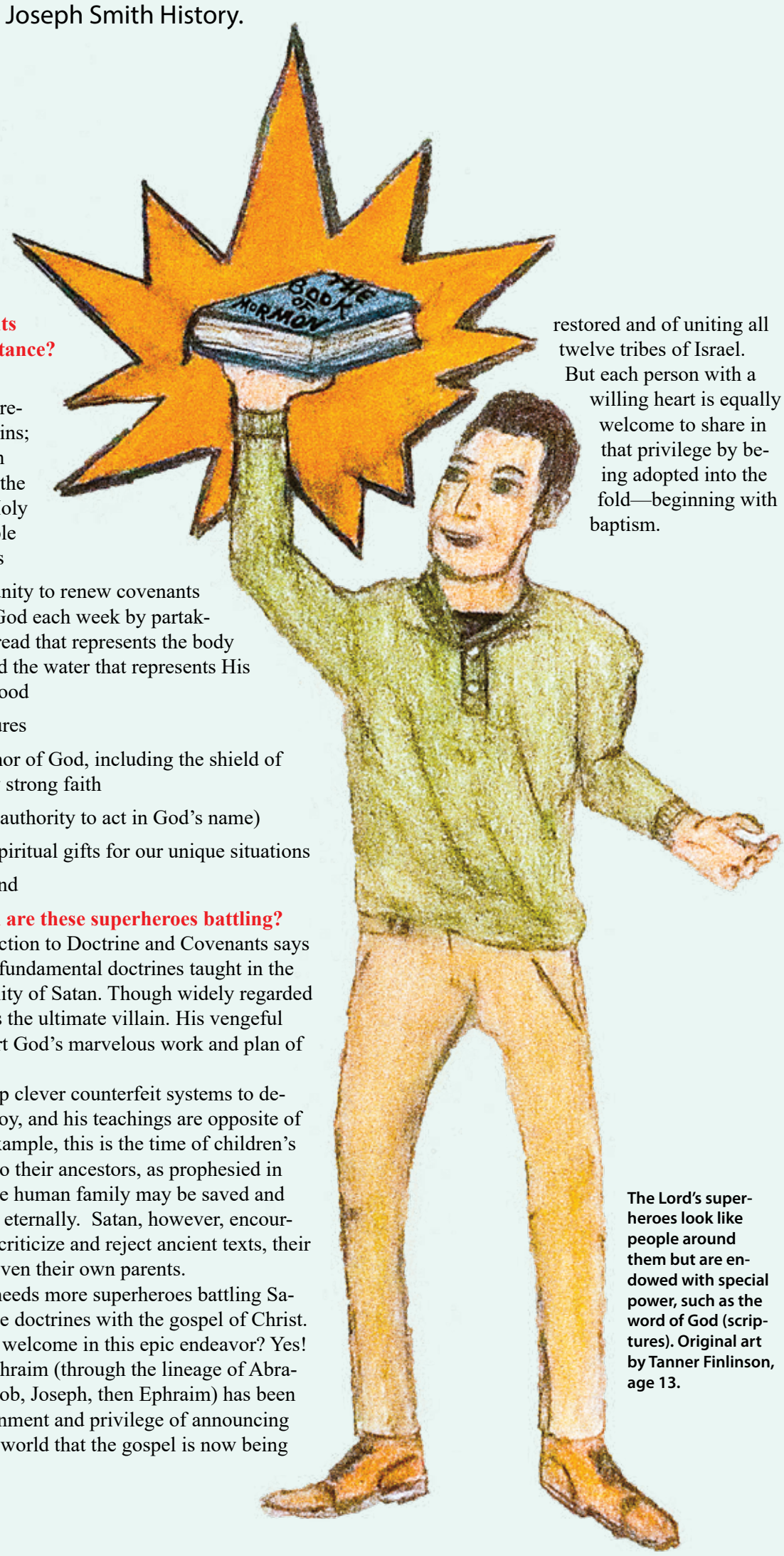
Against whom are these superheroes battling?

The introduction to Doctrine and Covenants says that one of the fundamental doctrines taught in the book is the reality of Satan. Though widely regarded as a myth, he is the ultimate villain. His vengeful goal is to thwart God's marvelous work and plan of happiness.

Satan sets up clever counterfeit systems to deceive and destroy, and his teachings are opposite of Christ's. For example, this is the time of children's hearts turning to their ancestors, as prophesied in the Bible, so the human family may be saved and sealed together eternally. Satan, however, encourages people to criticize and reject ancient texts, their ancestors and even their own parents.

The world needs more superheroes battling Satan's destructive doctrines with the gospel of Christ.

Is everyone welcome in this epic endeavor? Yes! The tribe of Ephraim (through the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, then Ephraim) has been given the assignment and privilege of announcing throughout the world that the gospel is now being restored and of uniting all twelve tribes of Israel. But each person with a willing heart is equally welcome to share in that privilege by being adopted into the fold—beginning with baptism.



The Lord's superheroes look like people around them but are endowed with special power, such as the word of God (scriptures). Original art by Tanner Finlinson, age 13.

Fostering Hope

The Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest

By Katherine Ogden

The Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest (LSS-SW) does tremendous work in our community for foster children, the indigent elderly, the homeless, adults with disabilities and refugees.

The Refugee Baby Shower group was created by Charlotte Shurtz, along with her mother-in-law Dana Shurtz, for their refugee clients. At first, the group started as just a one-time donation project for a Rohingya mother who had many needs for her two young children. However, Dana's volunteers from the Kimball East Stake were eager to continue to help and they realized that more new mothers needed this kind of support.

"Charlotte volunteered at LSS-SW for several years before being hired as a coordinator in 2019," says Dana. "She approached me that June with the idea of creating the Refugee Baby Shower group, and I was excited to participate!"

Many of these clients are expectant mothers who already face the barriers of resettlement, including language, economic & social issues. These baby gifts are a way of showing them that there's an entire community that supports them and gives them the security of receiving items they might not otherwise be able to afford at the time.

"What a joy and privilege it's been, especially during the challenges of Covid. It's given me a very positive thing to focus on during a difficult time," says Dana. "The number one thing I've learned from this experience is how much God cares about these women and babies. Time and time again, people have shown up at my door with a needed item at exactly the right moment. It's happened too often to just be coincidence."

Since June, they have "showered" 14 babies.

Photo by Robert Ogden

Kay Caine and some of her soon-to-be-donated diaper bags.

Volunteers led by Dana collect gifts, and contactless drop-offs then go to LSS-SW. The items are then distributed to the mothers by case managers, usually scheduled ahead of time and left on the porch, where they can be safely collected once the case manager has stepped away.

One of the volunteers, Kay Caine, sews each new mom a beautiful diaper bag as well as other infant items. "When I retired, I wanted to do something that would give back for all of the blessings I've been given," says Kay. "I made it a matter of prayer to know what to sew, being specific and asking the Lord for what I needed. Miracles began to happen. Whatever I needed would make its way to me. This is a project I believe the Lord wants done."

The project has been going on for less than a year, but the support they've already received from the community is a reflection of the generosity people continue to have in their hearts for those who are vulnerable and could truly use this kindness during trying times.

For further information, contact Dana Shurtz at danalee.az@gmail.com or Charlotte Shurtz at cshurtz@lss-sw.org.

Dana Schurtz at one of the recent baby showers. **Photo Courtesy of Charlotte Schurtz**

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A Remote Chance

By Heather Kidder

Make 2021 the Year of Connection

Personal health and wellness can manifest in maintaining healthy relationships with others, and wellness can be improved by spending a little more time connecting with people you have been missing! Travel restrictions and health concerns may have deterred visits to loved ones during 2020. This year, consider trying one of these creative long-distance practices to enhance long-distance relationships with people you have been missing. If hiccups to traditional plans have dampened your social and emotional health, consider giving one of these strategies to commemorate an upcoming birthday, holiday, or family-centered weekend!

Trivia. Ever tried Kahoot.com? Students may recognize it from the classroom, but it can become useful in the home as well. One family used this quiz-style game to share updates with extended family. Another family used this to celebrate the life of a grandparent and help the younger family members learn more about the grandparent's life. Create a free account, design a simple quiz on any topic, and share the code with loved ones! These quizzes can be played in real-time or completed by a deadline set by the creator.

Family Dinners. If family members have moved out or away and have not been able to reconnect, try using Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime to host a family dinner. Set a date during the month to celebrate life's milestones or simply get together. Some of these platforms have time limits, which can come in handy for busy schedules and motivate people to set aside that specific amount of time to connect. Families can try making the same meal, ordering out from a local diner or trying out a new recipe to share!

Photo by Mohammad Shahhosseini on Unsplash

Important life events cannot always wait for convenient times. Screen sharing can allow people to share support and enthusiasm for milestones no matter the distance.

Photo by Alexander Dummer on Unsplash

Even the busiest families can find time to check in using electronic resources we have all around us!

Thoughtful Cards. Crello.com and Canva.com are two examples of great, simple resources to use current photos and design electronic post cards to email to friends and family. Simply searching for "free postcard creator" will manifest an abundance of choices. Children can take pictures of their creations to share, and those feeling ambitious can print out their designs, add postage, and send the card in the mail! Letting others know you are thinking them can make a bigger difference than we may ever know.

Watch Parties. If you and your family already swap details about the latest and greatest shows being released, a watch party may be for you! Hulu has a built-in watch party function, but with some patience, families can use any other video conferencing software to watch favorite shows and movies together. Getting the movies started at the same time is vital, and all but one party may need to mute the computer. With practice, this can become a fun ritual to celebrate any shared holiday with loved ones!

AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE?
MEDICARE AND MORE

★ Will you soon qualify for Medicare but need some help getting the ball rolling?
★ Would you like a "Medicare 101" specialist to help you make personal decisions?
★ Do you wonder if all your providers might be in your designated network?
★ Do you wonder if you qualify for help paying for your prescription drugs?

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Immanuel
Saved
Rewarded
Atoned
Eternal
Loved

Count Down To Conference
Covenant Israel
A 6-Week Count Down To General Conference

"As you study your scriptures during the next six months, I encourage you to make a list of all that the Lord has promised He will do for covenant Israel. I think you will be astounded! Ponder these promises. Talk about them with your family and friends. Then live and watch for these promises to be fulfilled in your own life."

– PRESIDENT RUSSELL M. NELSON
"Let God Prevail"

Brought to you by:

LDSLiving

Find links to talks, videos & resources at ldsliving.com/Israel

Immanuel (FEB 21 – 27)

☐ SUNDAY SCRIPTURE
Read and ponder 1 Nephi 21:14–16.

☐ MONDAY MUSIC
Listen to "Redeemer of Israel" performed by GENTRI.

☐ TUESDAY TALK
Study "Let God Prevail" from the October 2020 general conference.

☐ WEDNESDAY WONDER
Ponder President Nelson's question, "Are you willing to let God prevail in your life?" Record thoughts and impressions that come.

☐ THURSDAY THOUGHT
Watch Brother Brad Wilcox's 5-Minute Fireside, "You Were Born to Change the World" and consider how you can use your influence for good.

☐ FRIDAY FAMILY
Ask a family member or loved one what it means to them to "let God prevail." Then share what it means to you.

☐ SATURDAY SHARE
Write in your journal about a time you felt God's presence in your life.

Saved (FEB 28 – MAR 6)

☐ SUNDAY SCRIPTURE
Read and ponder Doctrine and Covenants 98:37.

☐ MONDAY MUSIC
Listen to "Be Thou My Vision" performed by Nathan Pacheco.

☐ TUESDAY TALK
Study "The Sabbath Is a Delight" from the April 2015 general conference.

☐ WEDNESDAY WONDER
Ponder President Nelson's question, "Are you willing to let God be the most important influence in your life?" Record thoughts and impressions that come.

☐ THURSDAY THOUGHT
Read "The ultimate victory: How the death of Jesus Christ was a triumph, according to one BYU professor." Think about how the Atonement of Jesus Christ can help you triumph.

☐ FRIDAY FAMILY
Spend 10 minutes writing part of your personal history.

☐ SATURDAY SHARE
Reach out to someone you haven't seen at Church recently. Some may not be attending due to health concerns and may need to feel of your love.

Rewarded (MAR 7 – 13)

☐ SUNDAY SCRIPTURE
Read and ponder Psalm 31:23.

☐ MONDAY MUSIC
Listen to "Israel, Israel God Is Calling" performed by The Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square.

☐ TUESDAY TALK
Study "Hope of Israel," the June 2018 Worldwide Youth Devotional.

☐ WEDNESDAY WONDER
Ponder President Nelson's question, "Will you allow His words, His commandments, and His covenants to influence what you do each day?" Record thoughts and impressions that come.

☐ THURSDAY THOUGHT
Read "'The most important thing taking place on earth today': Why the gathering of Israel matters." Ponder why the gathering of Israel is important to you.

☐ FRIDAY FAMILY
Call a family member and ask them how they have seen the Lord's blessings in their lives. Write down what you learn.

☐ SATURDAY SHARE
Pray and ask how you can bless someone else's life today.

Atoned (MAR 14 – 20)

☐ SUNDAY SCRIPTURE
Read and ponder 3 Nephi 11:14.

☐ MONDAY MUSIC
Listen to "How Great Thou Art" performed by The Bonner Family.

☐ TUESDAY TALK
Study "Sisters' Participation in the Gathering of Israel" from the October 2018 general conference or "We Can Do Better and Be Better" from the April 2018 general conference.

☐ WEDNESDAY WONDER
Ponder President Nelson's question, "Are you willing to let whatever He needs you to do take precedence over every other ambition?" Record thoughts and impressions that come.

☐ THURSDAY THOUGHT
Read "Have we lost our awareness of what it means to by a chosen people?" by Robert L. Millet. Think about what it means to you to be part of the Lord's chosen people. This link will be available on March 1.

☐ FRIDAY FAMILY
Take time for the temple today, even though it may be closed. You could consider reflecting on past temple memories, pondering the covenants you've made, visiting temple grounds where possible, or having a conversation with your children about the temple.

☐ SATURDAY SHARE
Contact someone you minister to and share how the Savior's Atonement has blessed you.

Eternal (MAR 21 – 27)

☐ SUNDAY SCRIPTURE
Read and ponder Alma 7:16.

☐ MONDAY MUSIC
Listen to "The Spirit of God" performed by the Nashville Tribute Band and the Johnson family.

☐ TUESDAY TALK
Study "The Gathering of Scattered Israel" from the October 2006 general conference.

☐ WEDNESDAY WONDER
Ponder President Nelson's question, "Are you willing to have your will swallowed up in His?" Record thoughts and impressions that come.

☐ THURSDAY THOUGHT
Read "Not sure how to explain to your children what happens in the temple? These insights from Sister Aburto can help." Think about what you would tell your children about the temple.

☐ FRIDAY FAMILY
Familiarize yourself with the Ordinances Ready feature with a one-minute video available at LDSLiving.com/Israel.

☐ SATURDAY SHARE
Write down your testimony and send it to a loved one.

Loved (MAR 28 – APR 3)

☐ SUNDAY SCRIPTURE
Read and ponder 1 Nephi 17:40.

☐ MONDAY MUSIC
Listen to "I Feel My Savior's Love" from the album Shine.

☐ TUESDAY TALK
Study "Hear Him" from the April 2020 general conference.

☐ WEDNESDAY WONDER
Ponder President Nelson's question, "Will you allow His voice to take priority over any other?" Record thoughts and impressions that come.

☐ THURSDAY THOUGHT
Read "What would it be like to hear the Savior pray for you? Tom Christofferson asks how the experience would change you." Write down your feelings about what it would be like to hear the Savior pray for you.

☐ FRIDAY FAMILY
President Boyd K. Packer taught, "Family time is sacred time and should be protected and respected. We urge our members to show devotion to their families." Look for a way to spend time with your family today. You could consider attending Deseret Book's virtual Family Friday event.

☐ SATURDAY SHARE
Invite someone you love to watch general conference with you.

Sharing & Preserving Love Stories – Yours and Theirs

By Alyson Johnson

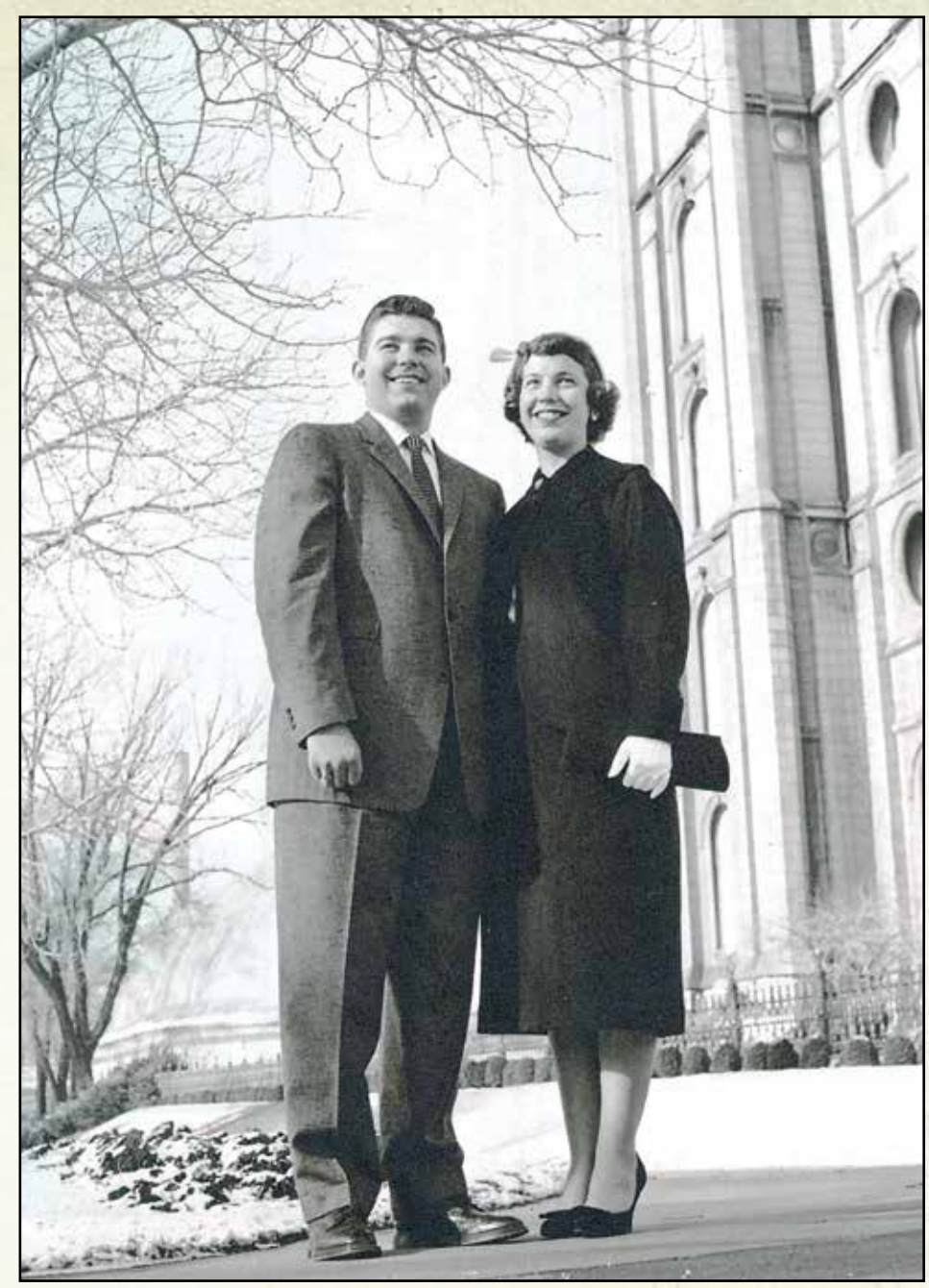


Photo by Don Busath

Newlyweds John and Karin Gunner outside the Salt Lake Temple after being sealed.

"Mawwiage. Mawwiage is what bwings us togethew today. Mawwiage, that bwessed awwangement, that dweam within a dweam. And wove, twue wove, wiww fowwow you fowevah and evah." My youngest son spoke these words from The Princess Bride as he began the wedding ceremony for my oldest son in December 2020.

Two of my kids met their spouses through Facebook—you know there are good stories there!

I met my husband playing volleyball at our BYU ward opening social in 1989. When he found out I was trying out for the women's softball team, he made me a pan of brownies to wish me good luck. I made the team and we ended up married!

I know you too have memorable dating, courtship and wedding experiences. Do you know how your parents and grandparents met, courted, and married?

My parents also met at BYU, where my mom was asked to help direct a male chorus for the 1955 Homecoming celebration. My dad joined the chorus and eventually asked her out, taking her to a dance for their first date. She was dreading it because he'd told her he wasn't a good dancer, so she was stunned when he turned out to be an Arthur Murray on the dance floor.

Later, as their wedding date approached, my parents wrote to Hugh B. Brown, then an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, asking for special permission to be married civilly then go immediately to the Salt Lake Temple to be sealed. My dad joined the church at BYU, and his parents were driving from Pennsylvania for the wedding celebration. He was concerned about their feelings were they not to be allowed to witness their oldest son's marriage.

Here is part of Elder Brown's reply: "Immediately upon receipt of your letter…I referred the matter to the First Presidency. They will reply to you direct…I feel quite sure it will be quite satisfactory to you and those concerned. Greetings and best wishes."

Permission was given and my parents were married in the Relief Society room of the Wasatch 2nd Ward building, then went straight to the Salt Lake Temple for their sealing.

My maternal grandfather married my grandmother after losing his first wife during surgery. My paternal grandmother was engaged to another man when my grandpa swept her off her feet.

Your family's love stories are waiting to be shared and preserved. Use the Memories app this spring to capture these precious memories before they're forgotten and lost.

(Android users can converse on the phone on speaker while recording the conversation as an audio memory in the Memories app. Apple phones will not do that, so use one phone to put the talker on speaker and hold it close to a second phone that is recording in Memories.)

family

Discover Your Story

Roots Tech helps connect during COVID-19

By Emmilie Whitlock

Looking for more family connections in the time of COVID? Try looking beyond the grave.

In an era of unprecedented changes, for the first time ever, RootsTech, the world's largest genealogical conference, was offered exclusively online for free.

RootsTech, hosted by FamilySearch, was held February 25-27 and offered dozens of classes, messages and celebrity keynote speakers. The conference included hands-on activities for a variety of ages to get connected with their heritage during the conference and beyond.

RootsTech helps families connect across generations. Photo via Pixabay

RootsTech organizers are hopeful that the event will encourage members and non-members alike to dive into their family heritage and work together to unite God's children through their familial ties.

Annette Muir, a Mesa resident who has previously attended RootsTech both in person and virtually said she loves the conference because of how it continues to connect her with Heavenly Father's children on both sides of the veil.

"All of God's children fit together in families like a massive quilt," said Muir. "God knows exactly how the quilt needs to fit together with all of His children sealed in families."

The blessing and great privilege, she said, is in working on the quilt with Him through this sacred work.

For many family history enthusiasts like Muir, RootsTech is a way to hone her skills, reignite her passion and utilize the vast technological resources available within the realm of family history work.

RootsTech brings together many of the major genealogical search engines for the event, all of which are free to use for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Such search engines include FamilySearch, Ancestry.com, MyHeritage, and FindMyPast, to name a few.

Muir, who first attended the conference in 2019 in Salt Lake City, said she is now able to use tools like these additional search engines because of what she learned at RootsTech. And because of that, it's helped her feel closer to God.

"As I work on FamilySearch, I feel like I'm lining up stitches, trying to get things sewed together. I've had increased gratitude for even the Catholic priest who recorded infant baptisms, because without him, this quilt wouldn't come together," Muir said. "Without the person who scanned thousands of parish records from Quebec, this quilt wouldn't come together."

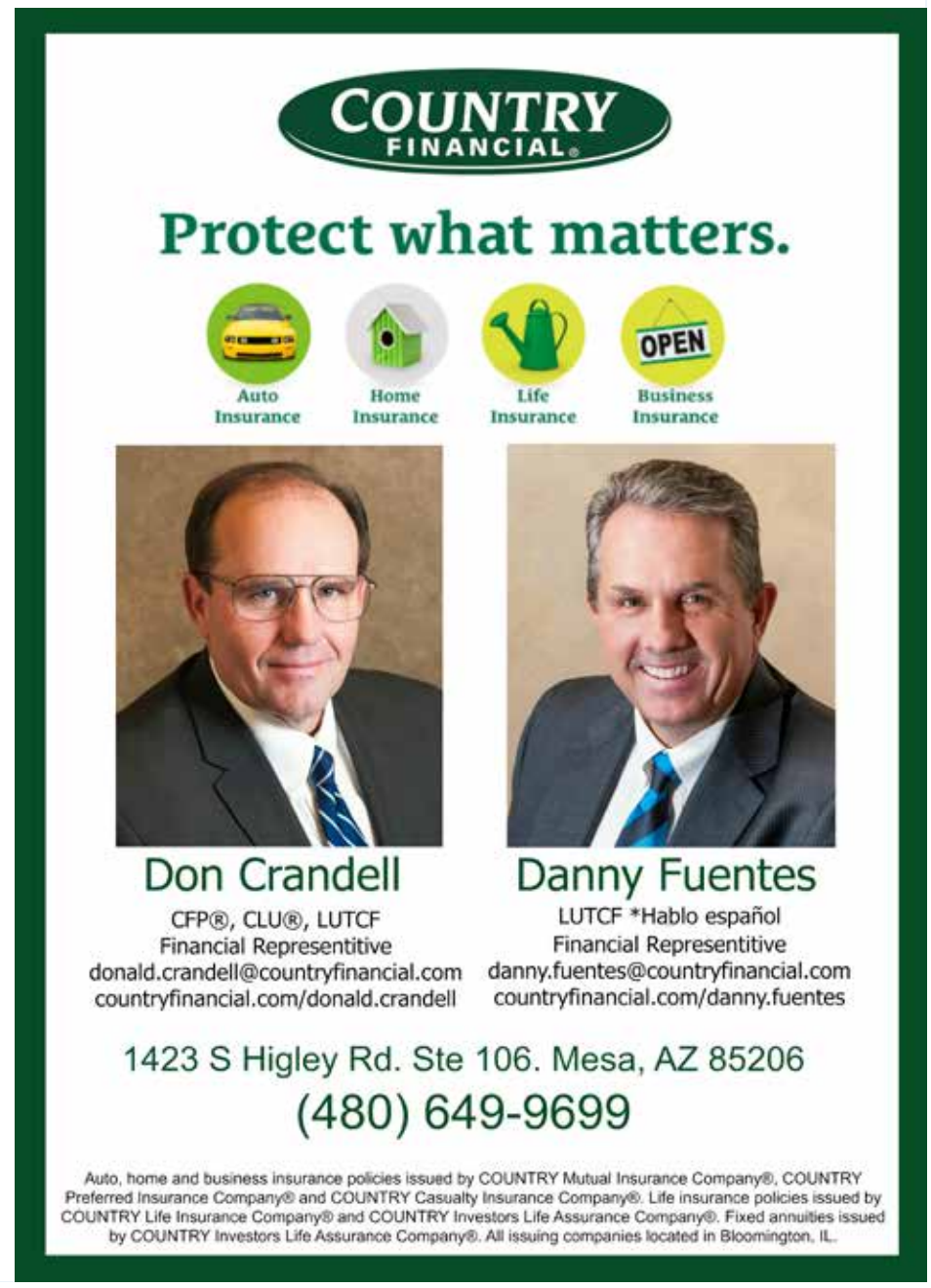
RootsTech offers hundreds of classes related to all facets of genealogical research from understanding foreign records, indexing and recording stories to using specific forms of technology or DNA tracing and testing.

But when it comes to the work, Muir said she has learned that her most important role in the quilted tapestry of family history work is her commitment to working on it.

"One job [within genealogical work] is not more important than the other, but as long as we give some time and do our part, eventually in God's perfect timing and with His diving help, the quilt of the entire family of all of God's children will be stitched together."

RootsTech 2021 Event Flier. Photo courtesy of RootsTech

Though February's virtual RootsTech's conference replaced the in-person event scheduled for this year, RootsTech is tentatively scheduled for an in-person conference in London later this fall. All plans are contingent upon COVID-19. More information on RootsTech and upcoming events is available for online at RootsTech.org.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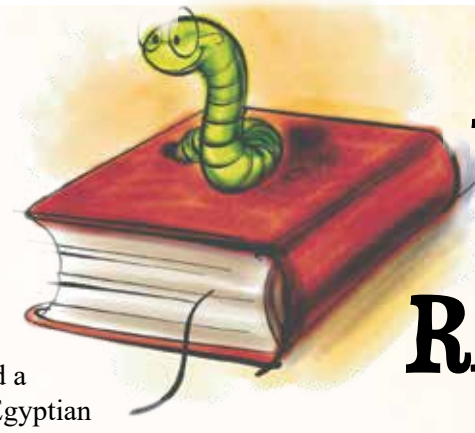


Beehive BOOK REVIEW

By Cindy R. Williams

Recently, Peggy Ann Shumway released her first book, a *Da Vinci Code*-type adventure with murder, intrigue, the fulfillment of a prophecy and an ancient relic, one that can change the face of humanity.

"My audience includes those sixteen to one hundred years of age who are seekers of truth, lovers of history, and enjoy a little romance thrown in. I want everyone who reads *Vestiges* to awaken to some mostly unknown facts about these cultures," says Shumway.

The story transpires in North American, including the United States, Canada and Mexico. It includes Old World historical cultures and relics from the Hopewell and Adena peoples.

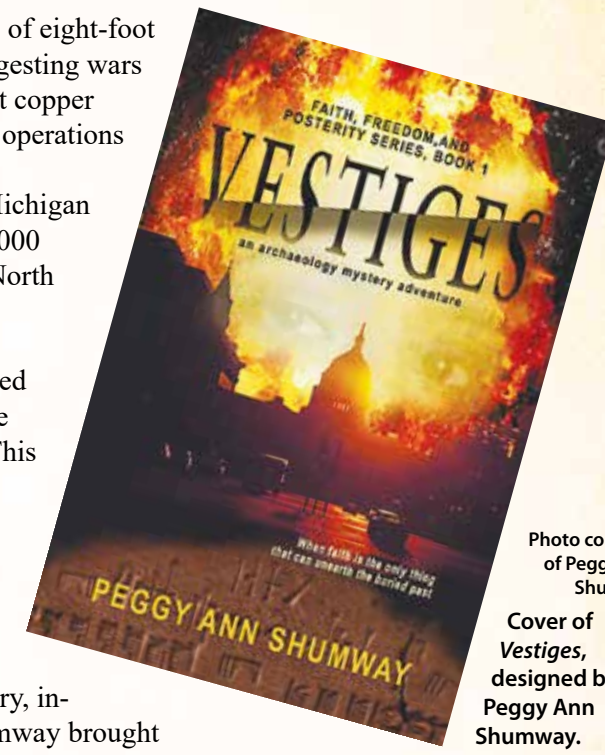
Shumway became fascinated by these ancient cultures after attending lectures years ago. She bought books and learned more.

Shumway says, "These peoples left behind burial grounds, temple plateaus, places of refuge and fortification and old relics that suggested a Semitic and Egyptian origin. Scientists had also uncovered evidence of eight-foot giants, pits of bones suggesting wars and mass burials, ancient copper mines and iron smelting operations among them."

She researched the Michigan Relics and the over 200,000 earthworks throughout North America.

Shumway says, "The Michigan Relics contained the Biblical beliefs of the flood and Jesus Christ. This information hooked me, and I had to write about it."

Soon, Neida and Lance, the two main characters, began speaking to her about their story, including a romance. Shumway brought them to life on the page.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When faith is the only thing that can unearth the buried past
PEGGY ANN SHUMWAY

Photo courtesy of Peggy Ann Shumway

Cover of *Vestiges*, designed by Peggy Ann Shumway.

Photo courtesy of Peggy Ann Shumway

Peggy Ann Shumway, author of a new historical/mystery/romance novel.

When asked what makes her book unique, Shumway answers, "I'm not aware of many books about the Hopewell culture, and I don't know too many people who have written fiction about Christ in America. That makes this series unique in scope and reach."

Shumway shares that she is a "member of The American Night Writers Association in the great state of Arizona."

Find out if Neida figures out the key to her pragmatic heart and embraces love. Will she and Lance undercover the vestiges of the past and what they mean to the rest of the world?

Vestiges is available digitally and in print on Amazon.

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What's Cooking?

WINNER, WINNER, FRIED CHICKEN DINNER!

By Rachael Fuller

I don't know about your family, but mine spends too much money on fried chicken restaurants. Whether your choice is classic KFC, always-popular Chick-Fil-A, ever-busy Cane's, millennial-loved Popeyes, or Texas transplant Bush's, there are so many fried chicken choices! Enter into this a budget—feeding 3 teenagers at these restaurants is an economic challenge—and add to that a desire for fried chicken on a Sunday, and I knew I had to find a recipe.

Chef Zach Sass, who hosts Zoom cooking classes, taught me how to make his amazing fried chicken.

Since taking his class, I am a fried chicken expert! I have even been told by my teenagers that my chicken is better than any of "those other guys."

Photo by Nick Fuller

Better than those other guys!

INGREDIENTS:

All-purpose flour – 2 cups

Kosher salt – 3 tbsp

Onion powder – 2 tbsp

Black pepper – 3 tbsp

Garlic powder – 2 tbsp

Buttermilk

Chicken – boneless thin cut breast or chicken thighs

Grapeseed or vegetable oil

Digital thermometer, to check temperature on oil and doneness of chicken

DIRECTIONS:

STEP 1: In a mixing bowl, combine flour, salt, pepper, onion powder and garlic powder. You can adjust seasoning level as you like. Set aside flour mixture.

STEP 2: In another mixing bowl, add chicken with buttermilk, making sure chicken is submerged. Let sit for 30 minutes.

STEP 3: In a large pot, add oil and bring to 350 degrees. I like to use my cast iron pot for this. I also prefer grapeseed oil. It has a higher burning point than regular vegetable oil, so the breading doesn't brown as fast and seems to last for more than one use. Once oil is at the proper temperature, we will begin the breading process.

STEP 4: Remove chicken from buttermilk, making sure to let as much buttermilk drip off chicken as possible. Add to the flour mixture and squeeze chicken into the flour, making sure the flour has coated chicken. (We will do this twice per piece of chicken.) Try to use one hand to take chicken in and out of the buttermilk and one for the flour mixture, or you will end up with gross flour gloves. Once the chicken is breaded, place it carefully into the pot of oil. Only cook 1 – 2 pieces of chicken at a time, depending on the size of your pot.

STEP 5: Cook for 3 to 4 minutes per side, depending on thickness.

STEP 6: Once chicken reaches 165 degrees, remove from oil and place on a cooling rack over a baking sheet to drain leftover grease; this also seems to keep the breading crunchy. Once cooled, slap on a bun (I recommend a good brioche bun), garnish with whatever condiments or veggies you like and enjoy!

Buttermilk fried chicken

Photo by Pinterest.com

Courtesy of Sarah Johnson

Members of Tempe's The Bridge Improv Comedy Theatre perform on stage.

Wholesome Comedy

New Improv Theatre Brings Laughs

By Merry Gordon

There's a little dark humor in the way Tempe's new improv theatre, The Bridge, came into being: the clean comedy performance space and training facility got its business license just as the pandemic took off.

"The world shut down the day we opened," laughs Travis Johnson, co-owner.

On the surface, it might look like the deck seemed stacked against them. Prior to opening The Bridge, when Johnson and his fellow co-owner, David Raferty, tried to buy out the improv theatre at which they first met, they got turned down.

"But when they said 'no,'" says Travis, "we said 'yes'"—and audiences have been saying 'yes' to The Bridge's family-friendly entertainment ever since.

Offering in-person and online performances and workshops, The Bridge seeks "to build connections between communities, between theatres, between groups of people," says Sarah Johnson, Travis's wife and a Bridge founding member.

Shows include long-form and short-form improv—think *Studio C* or *Saturday Night Live* sketches for the first and *Whose Line Is It, Anyway?*-style games for the latter. All shows feature clean humor suitable for any audience.

Travis's 8-year performance background has always been in wholesome comedy, and David had done improv for over a decade by the time they met.

"David's background wasn't nearly as clean as mine," Travis jokes, but his partner was soon sold on Travis's family-friendly brand of laughs.

"Clean improv challenges you more than any other version of improv in comedy," says David.

Courtesy of Sarah Johnson

Bridge owners David Raferty and Travis Johnson.

"You really have to work and get your audience members to buy into what you're doing because you don't get to use the shock humor to get them to laugh," Travis adds. "I love situational humor. I love high intelligent comedy where there are connections that need to be made, where at the end of it, your brain goes 'oh, never thought of it like that!'"

Improv differs from traditional stage shows in that the actors perform without a script, and often upon the audience's suggestion. The lively, think-on-your-feet nature of improv appeals to many not only because it's fun, but because it builds confidence.

"I had this recurring nightmare where I'm in a production and I've forgotten my lines," Sarah laughs. Since she began improv, she's never had it again. "I have much more confidence now," she says. "And I'm not so uptight!"

The Bridge looks to impart that confidence to others through their classes in improvisation, sketch comedy and stand-up.

Sarah especially loves teaching kids: "Kids are natural improvisers. I love to let kids feel confident in themselves—it helps them learn how to listen, how to be a good player, how to be more confident and poised in public."

Whether virtually or live, The Bridge offers laughs and respite to their audience. "The people who come out to see us want normal life again. A show that we do provides a blank slate for an hour of their life where they don't have to think about the rest of the world bearing down on them," says Travis.

Eventually, the team hopes to franchise The Bridge and open up more locations around the Valley.

"There's room for everyone," says Travis. "Our goal is to increase the footprint of clean comedy. The world needs more of what we have."

The Bridge Improv Theatre is located at 937 E Broadway Rd # 1, Tempe. Find them on the web at https://www.bridgeimprovtheater.com/ or by emailing info.bridgeimprov@gmail.com.

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Preparing with Pancakes

A General Conference Tradition

By Emily Jex Boyle

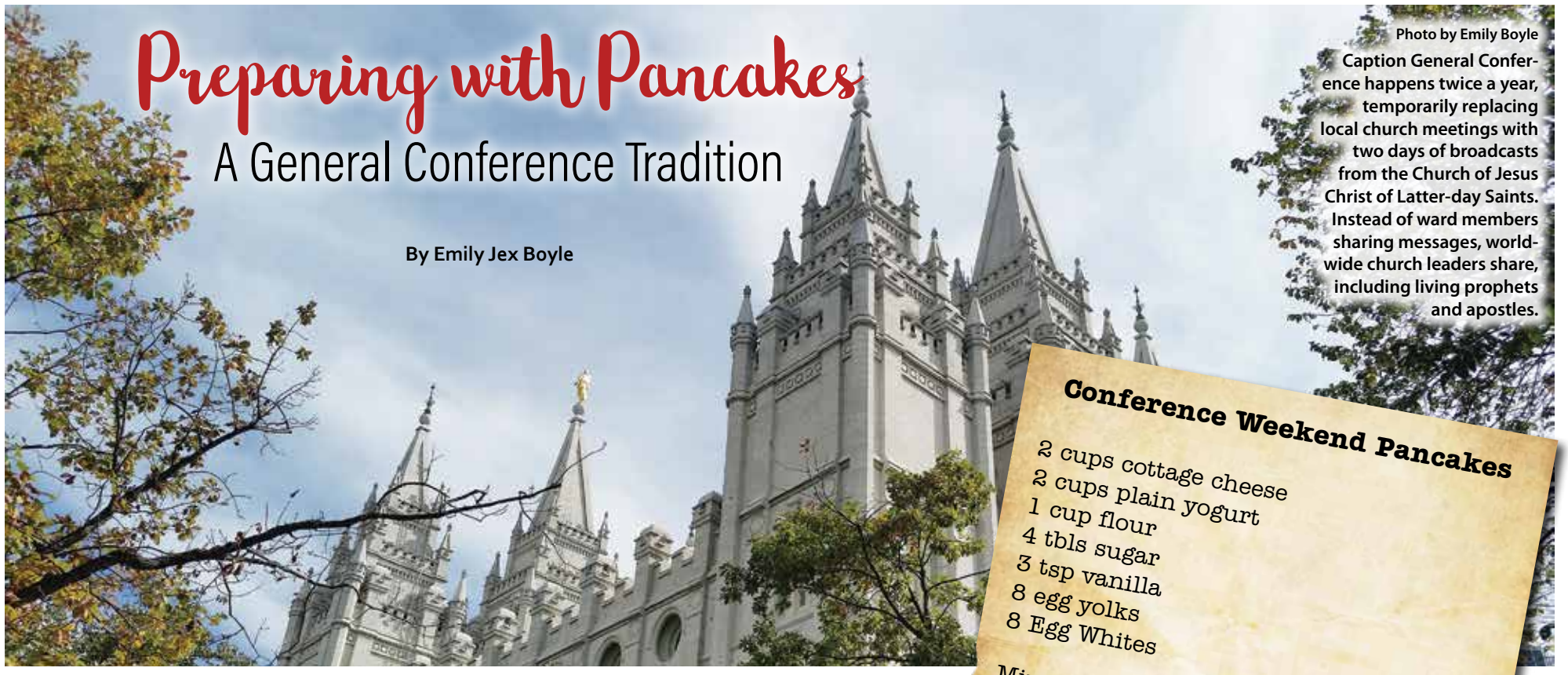

Photo by Emily Boyle

Caption General Conference happens twice a year, temporarily replacing local church meetings with two days of broadcasts from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Instead of ward members sharing messages, world-wide church leaders share, including living prophets and apostles.

Conference Weekend Pancakes

2 cups cottage cheese
2 cups plain yogurt
1 cup flour
4 tbls sugar
3 tsp vanilla
8 egg yolks
8 Egg Whites

Mix cottage cheese and yogurt together in a large bowl. Add flour, sugar, vanilla and egg yoks. Mix thoroughly. Beat egg whites until stiff then fold into mixture. Cook pancakes on a hot, oiled griddle.

Serves 7 people.

Where are traditions born? For my family, one was born on the side of the road many years ago.

While driving, my dad heard a radio broadcaster, Phil Riesen, talking about a low fat, low carb breakfast dish called "Colorado Surprise Pancakes." My dad remembers, "he even read off the recipe for it. I thought, 'This sounds really good,' and I thought it'd be fun on a special occasion since it required a little more work."

What did my dad do next? He pulled the car over to write down the recipe, made up primarily of plain yogurt, eggs and cottage cheese. He continues: "Mom and I agreed to make it for General Conference. Over the years we've adapted it, doubling, tripling, and halving it, depending on how many people we're serving. Sometimes I've cut back on the sugar."

General Conference happens twice a year, temporarily replacing local church meetings with two days of broadcasts from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Instead of ward members sharing messages, world-wide church leaders share, including living prophets and apostles.

Growing up, sweet and savory smells of breakfast would waft into my bedroom on Conference weekend, along with sounds of life in the kitchen. The pancakes on this weekend, in my eyes, were the best.

Conference Weekend Pancakes helped nourish and strengthen my connection to the spiritual principle of feasting on something more than food. I associated General Conference weekend with feasting not only for my belly, but for my faith in Christ.

Now grown up, my siblings and I continue the Conference weekend breakfast tradition across the country. (Even as a missionary in Italy, I made them, substituting ricotta for the cottage cheese.) Shared photos from breakfasts have been captured from Alaska to Maryland, Hawaii to South Carolina.

When asked about the pancakes, Dad says, "I'm glad my children like to make them." In the rare moments we find ourselves all in one geographic location, you'll often hear my dad say, "It's fun working in the kitchen together."

The Church's website (www.churchofjesuschrist.org) gives a recipe for preparing ourselves for the feast that is General Conference weekend:

- Review messages shared in past general conferences.
- Ponder questions you need answers to in your life.
- Prepare as the prophets do.
- Plan to listen with intent, then go and do.

President Russell M. Nelson says, "The Lord loves effort." Preparation is a key not only to a delicious meal but also to life. Traditions, like Conference Pancakes, bring people together and contribute a sense of comfort and belonging.

Does your family have a tradition for General Conference weekend? Write to us! We'd love to hear it.

Photo by Emily Boyle

President Russell M. Nelson says, "The Lord loves effort." Preparation is a key not only to a delicious meal but also to life. Traditions, like Conference Pancakes, bring people together and contribute a sense of comfort and belonging.

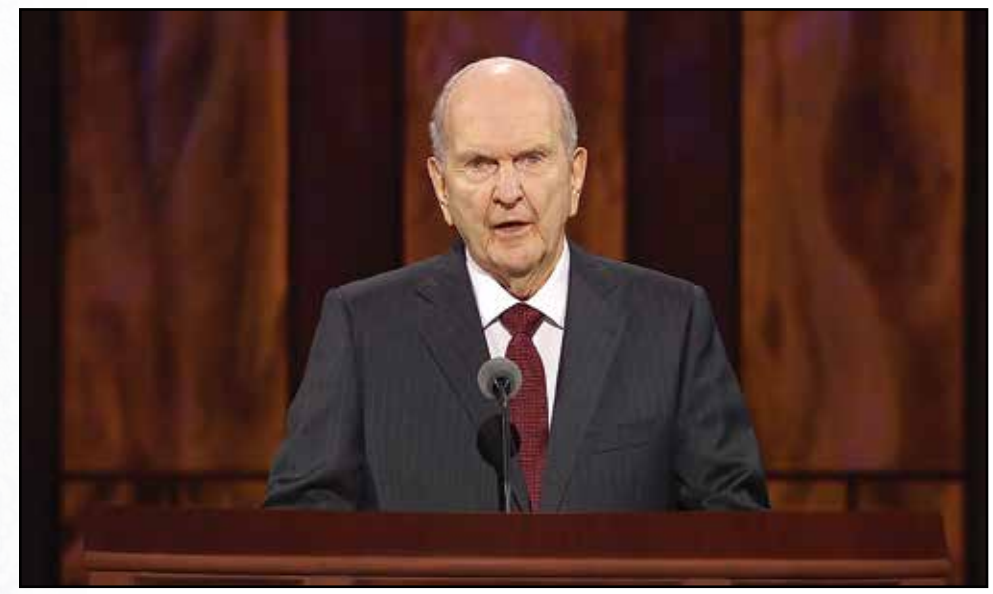

Photo by churchofjesuschrist.org/media-collection

President Russell M. Nelson at October 2020 General Conference.

JUSTSERVE

Cultivate Goodness

Providing Service Opportunities From Home For The Community

By Hillary Jade Fevrier

As 2021 unfolds and we still find ourselves under the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the desire and need to serve others have never been stronger. In early 2020, just weeks before nationwide shut downs, mask mandates and toilet paper shortages, a nonprofit organization, Cultivate Goodness, was founded by Kelly Geisler and Carrie Owens. Long before the official organizing of the charity, the founders were hosting service luncheons just for the sake of service. Projects included hygiene kits for children coming into foster care, providing essential home items for refugees, and even a benefit baby shower. Hosting these "service luncheons" opened their eyes to something they hadn't imagined: many of the people around them had the desire to serve, but didn't know how to start.

This realization inspired the duo to found Cultivate Goodness. The charity has a threefold mission—seek, gather, lift—and this mission takes on many different faces. The organization can help with a variety of ventures. Past projects have included providing meals at homeless and domestic violence shelters, providing holiday crafts and decorations to residents at nursing homes and working with active military and veterans. Cultivate Goodness focuses on helping within the community and making service easy and enjoyable, however that might happen. They seek for a need to fulfill, gather others to help satisfy it, then lift the needy (and each other) as they serve without expectation.

When shutdowns and social distancing spread through the Valley, the need for connection and community was more real than ever before. Because of the Cultivate Goodness's flexibility, it wasn't hard for them to create at-home service opportunities to share with the community when meeting in person was no longer an option. Partnering with other local charities, Cultivate Goodness has been able to assist with the need for interpersonal connection and bonding.

Photo courtesy of Kelly Geisler

The founders of Cultivate Goodness.

Photo courtesy of Kelly Geisler

Cultivate Goodness collected one ton of water for people in need.

Many of us may be looking for opportunities to serve, especially from home, and Cultivate Goodness has several different options for those looking to serve more in 2021. One of the best ways is to use the Shop for Others page on their website: http://cultivate-goodness.org/. Similar to the Church's Giving Machines, Shop for Others allows you to purchase supplies for someone in need from the convenience of your own device. You choose the product, and the team handles the rest. Anyone interested in Shop for Others or any of the services available through Cultivate Goodness can visit their website or social media pages.

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/cultivategoodness

Instagram: @cultivategoodness

It's no secret that there has never been a time when more people needed a helping hand, and Cultivate Goodness has made it easy and convenient to reach out and serve. "For even the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve" —we should follow the lead of our Savior and truly "cultivate the goodness" in each of us however we can.

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For excellent sources of updated info regarding renovation work, find Mesa Temple Construction on Facebook, and visit https://churchofjesuschrist-temples.org/mesa-arizona-temple/news/

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- Maintain closure of patron housing, clothing, and cafeteria operations

2021 Temple Closures

Saturday, 3 April
Monday, 5 April - Monday, 19 April
Saturday, 2 October
Monday, 4 October - Monday, 15 November
Wednesday, 24 November - Thursday, 25 November
Friday, 24 December - Saturday, 25 December
Friday, 31 December

Please check https://www.churchofjesus-christ.org/temples regularly for updates.

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- Maintain closure of patron housing, clothing, and cafeteria operations

2021 Temple Closures

Saturday, 3 April
Monday, 17 May 2021 - Monday, 31 May
Saturday, 2 October
Monday, 1 November - Monday, 15 November
Wednesday, 24 November (Limited Operations)
Thursday, 25 November
Friday, 24 December - Saturday, 25 December
Friday, 31 December

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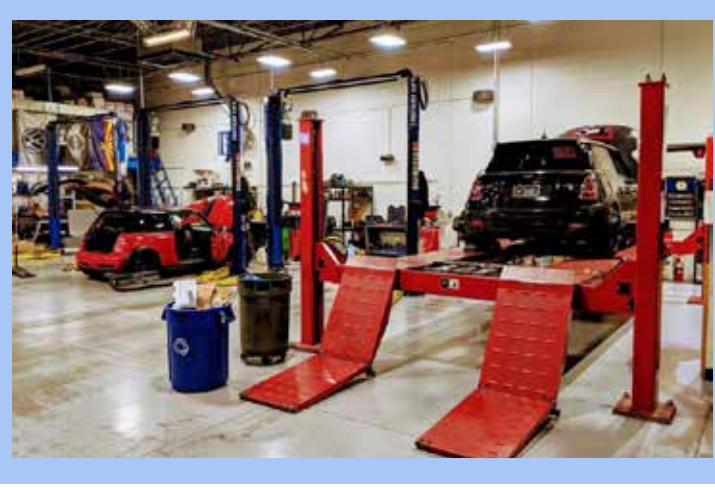

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